A Special Invitation

Bethany House - changing children’s lives for 30 years!

Because you have been an important part of our life at Bethany, we invite you to join us at

Our Thank You Celebration

Sunday, May 4, 2008, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm in
The Anselma Room of Molloy College
1000 Hempstead Avenue, Rockville Centre, NY 11570
- The only gift we ask is your presence -

Our Time to Remember Program will begin at 2 pm

All are welcome - special activities for our children

RSVP by April 20, 2008 [envelope enclosed]
30th Anniversary Celebration
Off to Great Start
Bethany's Board Multiplies Talents

In September 2007, twelve members of Bethany’s Board of Directors were given an innovative challenge that tested their investing skills. Based on the Scriptural story of The Multiplication of Talents, the Board members were each given $30.00 from a $360 donation we received that was earmarked expressly for this purpose. The Board members’ mission was to invest the $30.00 in something that would benefit Bethany House.

Bethany’s Board members proved that they were wise investors: their combined efforts generated a total return of $4,045 – a return of over 1000%! One of our Board members contacted a graphic artist and arranged for him to create a new logo for Bethany’s Code of Ethics; one baked “Biscotti for Bethany” and sold her delicious treats near and far, generating a tidy sum; one “invested” in a chance on a 50/50 and won the entire pot! Still, another traded the $30 back and forth in the international exchange market and tripled the initial investment amount. Others sent letters to friends asking them to help us celebrate our 30th with good wishes and... possibly a donation.

The amounts generated by our dedicated Board members ranged from $60 to $1,540. The grand total of $4,045.00 from this effort will be used to meet the needs of our residents and has shown that our Board members have indeed increased and multiplied the talents entrusted to them!

Coming Events at Bethany:

Boxtown at Mollay
April 3, 2008
9 PM - 7 AM

Bethany Board Celebrates
The Bethany Staff
April 22, 2008
6 PM - 10 PM

Our Thank You Celebration
For 30 Years
Molloy College
May 4, 2008
1 PM - 4 PM

12th Annual Golf Outing:
Monday, July 21, 2008
Tam O’Shanter Golf Club
For an invitation packet, please call
Linda at 868-6866

What’s In A Word? Beginnings

A beginning is the start of an action, a thought, or a dream. “Beginnings” implies that we do this more than once; of course, we do. The entire pattern of our lives consists of a myriad of beginnings from our first step, first school, first job, first child. We always hope that each of our “beginnings” will be great, will be safe, will be something new and desirable. We want them to continue and we try to keep moving in a positive and progressive direction.

However, sometimes we misstep, choose to begin something that is wrong or suffer unexpected occurrences. We find ourselves unable to progress, and we fall. The “beginnings” that had seemed so promising are now failures. When women and children find themselves with no support system, no way to move forward, hope is lost. The distance required to begin again seems too far to travel. When you come to Bethany, we help you take that first step on the road to a new beginning.

That’s how Bethany House began with 3 women taking that first step. It progressed to many “beginnings” that have been offering strength, comfort and motivation to the homeless women and children for 30 years.

Turning Point was chosen as the title of our Newsletter because Bethany House is a true turning point for the many women and children who come to its doors seeking not only shelter, but seeking “new beginnings”. Isn’t it our mission to help them with that “first step”?

Jessie Fontner
A Valentine's Party for Bethany House
Opening Generous Hearts to Bethany's Children

*Imagine this:* dim lights, lots of candles glowing on tables set with a beautiful black and cream motif, soft dance music playing and couples enjoying a variety of delicious foods and drinks in the company of their close friends. This was the scene at the very elegant *Bethany House Valentine Dinner Dance* held on February 8, 2008 at the Rockville Links Golf Club in Rockville Centre. This evening proved to be another very successful fundraising venture for Liz Cronley and Carolyn Melillo, *Bethany's Angels*, as everyone had a wonderful time and many were reluctant to leave when the evening came to an end! Having organized our *Fashion Show and Award Dinners* for several years, Liz and Carolyn decided to try "something new" which would appeal to couples - and we are so happy with their choice!

Even though this affair only lasted for three hours (the perfect evening out), proceeds of more than $30,000 were raised for Bethany House. All of the unique and attractive items presented at the auctions had been donated by generous supporters, and they alone raised a total of $22,000. One gentleman said, "What I like about Bethany House is: it's real - when I give to Bethany, I know I make a difference." These sentiments were echoed by many of our kind donors, particularly after they viewed Bethany's new video which Liz Cronley had worked on producing for this special event.

And we know, it's people like *Liz and Carolyn and all their committee members* who make such a difference in the lives of our children through their tireless gifts of time, talent and love which are poured out to help Bethany House. We deeply appreciate all that you do and all that you are to us! We thank you all, and we look forward to your continuing to try "something new" in the near future!

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**What Does Your Gift Do?**

Charitable donations to Bethany House are used to provide direct services for those who are homeless, hungry, and in need of a little extra help to make it through some rough days. Your support helps to:

- Shelter, clothe, and feed up to 85 homeless women and children every day in clean, comfortable, safe surroundings.
- Provide a secure home environment with a wide range of supportive social, educational, and counseling services for up to 40 families each day who have fled domestic violence.
- Offer residential recovery services - education, counseling, and support - for young mothers caught in dysfunctional lifestyles who are struggling to create a better life for their children.
- Provide day, evening, and weekend supportive counseling and life direction for 10 to 15 young mothers each day who are working to fine-tune their parenting skills and learn better coping skills so that they may care for their children in a more holistic way.
- Provide nutritious, well balanced meals [breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks] for all of Bethany's guests every day, all year long.
- Celebrate the birthday of each child and each adult with gifts, a special dinner and, of course, a birthday cake!
- Provide quality and compassionate responses to the degrading and de-humanizing aspects of homelessness.

Because of your great generosity, all of these services are given free of charge in the spirit of caring, mutual respect, and love. **THANK YOU** for making all this possible!
Bethany House’s Beginnings
from Humble Beginnings to Acclaimed Temporary Shelter

In 1978:
A first-class postage stamp cost 13c
A gallon of gas was 63c while milk was 87c per half-gallon
The median household income, adjusted for inflation, was $15,064
The average life expectancy was 73.5 years
The Dallas Cowboys won the Super Bowl and the New York Yankees beat the Dodgers in the World Series
John Cheever and John Irving topped the New York Times Best Seller list and Annie Hall won the Academy Award for best movie of the year
Sony rolled out its Walkman® portable stereo, and three men sailed across the ocean in the Double Eagle II, making history as the world’s first successful transatlantic balloon flight.

1978 was important for something else as well: it was the year that Sisters Chris Braue, Frances Marrinan and Aimee Koonmen of the Amityville Dominicans responded to the needs of families who had been displaced from their homes and had nowhere to stay. The three Sisters rented a small house for $275 a month and opened their doors to those who needed a place to come when there’s no place to go until they were able to get back on their feet.

The house was located on Taylor Avenue in Roosevelt and, to the Sisters’ surprise, came equipped with a failsafe security system: a large German shepherd named Bullet. Bullet soon became part of the welcoming spirit of Bethany and guarded his home and its guests with his faithful presence. It is from these modest beginnings that Bethany House grew into what it is today.

One of the first things that needed to be done was to give this house a name, one that would speak of its mission. The Sisters agreed on Bethany House because the Christian Scriptures speak of Bethany as the place that Jesus went to rest when on a journey. Good friends lived there – Martha, who took care of the physical needs of the travelers and Mary, who sat with the guests and listened to the stories of their lives and their struggles.

Bethany House was the perfect name for the little house that welcomed strangers with warmth and compassion, provided for their many needs and offered them a true home in which to rejuvenate their bodies and spirits! Soon after, the Sisters learned that the word Bethany was an Aramaic word meaning The House of the Afflicted, confirming for them their belief that we are all in need of wholeness and healing and that we ourselves receive the gift of wholeness and healing as we reach out to respond to the same need in others.

Since the Sisters had to account to their superiors for the little money they received from their parish work, Bethany House’s initial budget report showed expenditures for the purchase of two pairs of curtains and two second-hand parson tables. All the other items in the house were donated by friends, neighbors and parishioners from the local Catholic parish, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. Bethany’s beginnings were, indeed, most humble!
Bethany's early days were filled with many stories of miracles when the Sisters were left without because they had helped others — a stranger would stop by with exactly what was most needed at the time.

The Sisters based their new ministry on the Old Testament passage from Isaiah 58: “This, rather, is the fasting I ask of you: share your bread with the hungry, shelter the homeless poor, clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back upon your own.” Their challenge was to provide for the material needs of those who struggle, but also to recognize that people need more than just material goods. The Sisters and those who volunteered with them would offer the gift of time to others so that those in need could regain their strength in a place of healing.

Over the years Bethany House has grown to become a supportive temporary and transitional shelter to hundreds of women and children who need a place to rest on the journey. It has also become a place of many miracles where people are “loved back to life” each day! Over the 30 years it has been in operation, Bethany has grown with the times, growing from a shelter that could accommodate three residents in a single house to up to eighty-five people in three warm, welcoming residences and a wonderful apartment building.

Did You Know . . .

- In September 1981, Linda Wilkonski became Bethany's first employee and she is still with us today. Her commitment to Bethany is surpassed by none!
- At Christmas in 1982, Billy Joel gave us a $5,000 donation. We used it to remodel the kitchen at Bethany One – just remodeled in 2006.
- In 1987 Bethany House was incorporated as a Non-profit, not religiously affiliated Corporation with its own tax-exempt status.
- Bethany averages 6 to 10 pregnant young women each night. At present, we have five “very pregnant” women and two brand new babies!
- Bethany has begun a new program to assist mature single women who struggle to make ends meet. This program is housed at Bethany, Too!
- Bethany was the first emergency shelter for women and children on Long Island.
Children Lead the Way ~
Random Acts of Kindness . . .

TO Sister Amie

Hope this kind donation of $15.65 goes to good use. I hope the kids like the 2 pairs of socks I got them. If any kids want a penpal, contact Aunt Mo 'cause I would love 2.

GOD Bless

Chrisie came to know about the children of Bethany from her Aunt Mo who had stayed with us several years ago and still keeps in touch. Wanting to make a difference for some of our children, Chrisie took some money out of her piggy bank and bought them two warm, pretty scarves. She then took all the change and put it in an envelope with the accompanying note, asking Aunt Mo to "get it to the kids" for her. It was such a special gift that we used the money to buy special treats for all our little ones: pizza and ice cream sandwiches! Thank you, Chrisie, for remembering with such love . . .

Bethpage High School Raises Funds, Spirits at Annual Talent Show

Bethpage High School's Student Civic Association recently held its annual Talent Show and selected Bethany House as the beneficiary this year of its impressive fundraising efforts. Student members of the Civic Association presented Bethany House's Devorah Crupar with the results of their efforts: a $2,000 check that will be put to good use in helping Bethany House improve the lives of its residents.

The Civic Association's Talent Show was a formidable success both as a fundraiser and inspirational evening out for students and their families and friends. Bethpage High School's Indian Explosion dance team was the winner of the evening's competition, dazzling the audience with its fancy foot work.

In December, Bethpage High School's Civic Association made a donation of cuddly teddy bears that were given out to young residents to brighten their spirits for the holidays. The Association also hosted a holiday dinner at Bethany One that was a culinary treat for all who participated. Much thanks to Bethpage High School for their most appreciated contribution.

Members of the Indian Explosion dance team, DJ Rocky, Judges John Nitti and Ken Schroy, formerly of the NY Jets, actress Jennifer Johnson and Bethany House's Devorah Crupar celebrate together.
Sister Aimee Recognized by the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame
Celebrated for Life of Volunteerism and Humanitarianism

Bethany House’s Executive Director and Founder, Sister Aimee Koonmen, was honored by the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame at its Annual Awards Luncheon held on February 3, 2008. The award was presented to Sister Aimee at The Carlyle on the Green Restaurant in Bethpage State Park. Now in its sixth year, The Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame celebrates individuals who give of themselves through the spirit of humanitarian to benefit the lives of others.

Each year it inducts ten individuals into its Hall of Fame who have served the Long Island community through their humanitarian outreach efforts. Inductees are recognized for their commitment to a nonprofit organization that has improved, in some way, the lives of others. Those named to the Hall of Fame are chosen on the basis of their vision, dedication, drive and the actions they have taken to address the needs of their community.

Sister Aimee was recognized for her unwavering dedication to providing homeless mothers and their children with a supportive, loving environment which nurtures their spirit, builds their confidence, and provides them with the encouragement they need to go out on their own and better care for themselves and their children.

Each of the ten honorees gave an impassioned speech about their organization. In speaking about Bethany House, Sister Aimee underscored its commitment to single moms in crisis and Bethany’s mission to provide the “generosity of life” to all those who are in need. Sister’s words were met with a warm, standing ovation, led by Bethany’s Board members, staff members and friends who attended the event with her. Congratulations, Sister Aimee, on this special day!

Celebrating with our Honoree were: 1st row, l to r: Ah’Niyah Neal, Stephanie Montgomery, S. Aimee Koonmen, Linda Wilkonski. 2nd row, l to r: Theresa Sparrow-Gill, Jessie Fentnor, Janie Howard, Jane Banfield, and Clarice Curry.

A Stimulus Check May be Waiting for You

Beginning this May, the IRS will be issuing “economic stimulus” payments of up to $600 for individuals and $1,200 for married couples, based on 2007 tax returns it receives. Parents will receive an additional $300 for each eligible child. But - you must file a 2007 tax return in order to be eligible. Individuals who have earned at least $3,000 or received $3000 in Social Security, Railroad Retirement, Veterans Affairs or other similar types of benefits may also be eligible. Additional details can be found at www.irs.gov. 

Millions of people will be eligible but may not know it: retirees, disabled veterans, and low-wage workers who normally don’t file a tax return are among them -- and are most in need of that stimulus check. The stipulation to receive the stimulus payment is that you must file a tax return, even if you are not normally required to file with the IRS. The deadline for filing an IRS Form 1040A to claim the Economic Stimulus Payment is December 1, 2008, NOT April 15th. Please spread the word. Additional information, including where to get help with tax forms, can be found at www.retiredamericans.org.
THE AVERAGE PERSON SPENDS
365 HOURS A MONTH AT HOME.

Imagine...
WHAT IT'S LIKE NOT TO HAVE ONE -

Bethany House
102 Whitehouse Avenue
Roosevelt NY 11575
516 868-6866

... changing children's lives for 30 years!

Brooklyn, New York
Tam O'Shanter Golf Club
AT
Monday July 21, 2008
ON
12th Annual Golf Outing
Announces its
Bethany House
Hold This Date